



Volume 22 Issue 1/2

SPRING 2009

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

# The ACOSA Update!



## IT'S TIME TO VOTE Bridging to the Future



### ACOSA IS CONDUCTING ITS ELECTION FOR NEW BOARD REPRESENTATIVES AND CHAIR- ELECT.

As we readjust to the new CSWE-APM schedule, which will necessitate some minor by-law revisions, we are conducting an election for new Board representatives from our regions, as well as for the important Chair-Elect or Vice Chair position. The Vice Chair will assume the ACOSA chair at the fall 2010 annual board and membership meeting that will occur during the 2010 Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting scheduled for Portland, Oregon.

Ballots are enclosed in this newsletter. Voting is open to all ACOSA members, and you can send in your ballot with your renewal. All ballots must be in by May 18, 2009. (See page 5)

We are hoping you will take this opportunity to reconnect with ACOSA and help us select our future leadership. Candidates are running in each of the ACOSA geographic, representational regions and will bring new perspectives and energy to the organization.

**Please take the time to VOTE now!**

*Dear ACOSA Members,*

We are initiating an ACOSA membership drive in conjunction with our current elections. We ask you help in building our members in your region and at your institution. With the growing focus on community organizing, ACOSA needs to step up its efforts to provide avenues for educating community practitioners and advancing programs in our schools and universities.

*The New York Times'* (Sara Rimer, April 10, 2009) article, "Community Organizing Never Looked So Good" has draw strong interest as it conveys the burgeoning interest in community organizing.

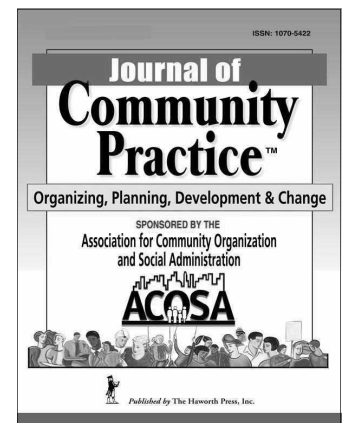
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/fashion/12organizer.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

The recent expansion of AmeriCorps and VISTA national service programs with the passage of the *Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act* is further evidence of the re-awakening of community practice.

These indicators along with the citizen empowerment and community engagement and social action initiative discussed in this issue, call us to press for the growth of macro practice programs to educate the next generation of community organizers. It's a great opportunity for ACOSA.— *Tracy Soska, Chair*

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# ACOSA Goes to Japan

By *Shinichi Murota*

In January, 2009, two representatives from ACOSA, Terry Mizrahi and Yossi Korazim-Korosy, were invited to Japan to present their research findings on interdisciplinary community collaboration and development. As you might know that Dr. Korazim, our board member, co-edited an issue of *Journal of Community Practice* (volume 15, issue 1/2), and the issue was also published as a book "Interdisciplinary Community Development: International Perspective" in 2007. Dr. Mizrahi was a co-author in one of the articles from the issue.

If you look at the summer-2006 issue of *ACOSA Update!*, you will find out that it is not the first time for me to write about ACOSA-Japan relationships. In the previous article, I wrote about a trip in which Dr. Mizrahi was invited to make presentations at academic meetings in Japan. As a graduate student at Hunter College School of Social Work at the time, I was invited to be her interpreter. This time, as a research fellow and a doctorate student in Japan, I organized an international conference to discuss about interdisciplinary community development in international perspectives among Japan, Israel and the U.S.

The conference was held on Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at Doshisha University in Kyoto. Over 70 people attended the conference. Although the turnout was not as great as we hoped to be, we had a nice mixture of faculty, students, and people from the field attending the conference. The conference was co-sponsored by ACOSA and Japan Research Association for Community Development (JRACD), an equivalent organization of ACOSA in Japan. It was the first time for both ACOSA and JRACD to collaborate such an event, so it was significant in that sense as well.

The conference started with two opening remarks- one by Professor Tsuneji Makisato, the president of JRACD, and another was by Dr. Mizrahi who read a letter from Tracy Soska, the chair of ACOSA. Then the program was followed by three presentations, Dr. Korazim, Professor Kayoko Uenoya, a social work professor from Doshisha University, and Dr. Mizrahi in the order. The program ended with 1 hour open-floor discussion with coordinator, Yu Nagata, a lecturer from Doshisha University.

In his presentation, Dr. Korazim talked about his research which he gave the background of the research, a tentative



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definition of interdisciplinary community development, and the direction for future practices and researches. His research was developed through a collaborative process among researchers in Israel and in the U.S., so he explained the steps which were taken in both countries.

Dr. Korazim's presentation was followed by Prof. Uenoya, who has been providing supervision and consultation to Matsue city in Japan, a city in Shimane prefecture with population of approximately 200,000. She has co-edited a book about the community-based social welfare planning in Matsue city which came out of her decade-long action research. In her presentation, "Interdisciplinary Community Collaboration in Japan," she explained how interdisciplinary collaboration is becoming a key element in community work/development today. City of Matsue is known for its community-based programs with community halls as neighborhood bases, which provide a space for local residents to participate in volunteer activities and collaborate with social workers who provide professional support for them. She concluded her presentation with the outcomes of interdisciplinary community development and the predicted challenges for its implementation.

Finally, Dr. Mizrahi made her presentation about the findings from her latest research. Dr. Mizrahi and her colleagues conducted a research which they asked deans and heads of schools of social work in Israel, Canada and the U.S. to fill out a survey regarding interdisciplinary education in their programs. She shared premium findings from their survey. Some of which are, 1) many universities (more than 70%) promote intra-university collaboration, 2) most universities promote university-community collaboration, and 3) most frequent reward for collaboration is university/school recognition among three countries. At the end, Dr. Mizrahi turned the microphone to the audience and asked for some feedback and suggestions for future researches. She also suggested that Japanese researchers to conduct the same survey in Japan for the purpose of international comparison.

Three presentations were stimulating, and the open-floor discussion was very . One attendee raised a point that the

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# ACOSA INTERNATIONAL REPORT

By Lee Staples and Yossi Korazim-Korosy

The International Initiatives Committee (IIC) has added new members and continues its work to increase ACOSA membership outside the United States. Two events in early 2009 are of particular note. At the end of January, an International Conference on the topic of "Interdisciplinary Community Development" was held by the Center for Social Welfare, at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. The meeting was co-sponsored by ACOSA and organized by doctoral candidate Shinichi Murota (Hunter College alumnus and IIC member), and discussion focused on developing collaborative relationships among the U.S., Israel and Japan. Yossi Korazim-Korosy (Israel) and Terry Mizrahi (US) both represented ACOSA and played central roles in this gathering, which is reported in greater depth in this Issue. A number of good ideas and suggestions were put forth in response to the question, "What would you want from ACOSA? What would make you invest in ACOSA?"

This information helped structure the agenda for the IIC conference call that took place on February 10<sup>th</sup> and included eight IIC members (Lee Staples, who chaired the discussion, Yossi Korazim-Korosy, DeBrenna Agbenyiga, Alice Butterfield, Ram Cnaan, Danielle Hamner, who took minutes, Terry Mizrahi, and Shinichi Murota). Most of the discussion addressed the question, "What membership benefits can ACOSA offer to individuals who live and practice outside the United States?" A number of ideas emerged from this dialogue, which was informed by the earlier meeting in Japan:

◆ We explored ways that current ACOSA members might assist non-English first language speakers who want to write about best practices in their countries. A pool of ACOSA members potentially could be available to help international colleagues with technical editing before submission of their articles. A variety of outlets for such pieces exist, including this *ACOSA Update*, the website, and *Journal of Community Practice*.

◆ Consistent with the last ACOSA Board Meeting, the group saw the need to strengthen the website. It was suggested that a section of the website could be made available to "members only," thereby increasing the incentive to join. A number of ideas for this website section were discussed, including posting selected lectures used in the classroom, video material, professional articles, best prac-



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tices, and online journals.

◆ There also was considerable discussion about more interactive online options. Terry Mizrahi recently co-hosted a one hour online lecture series for NASW that included the ability for participants to ask questions. There is potential for ACOSA to sponsor similar interactive offerings, including lectures, mini-courses, and workshops.

◆ We looked at the possibility of online chat groups and learning networks, organized by shared areas of interest (ex. interdisciplinary practice, community development, environmental justice, youth organizing, etc.) that might include both practitioners and academics.

◆ Current ACOSA members with expertise in certain areas could serve as mentors for colleagues in other countries. There is potential for collaborative research, joint presentations at conferences, and co-authorship of comparative best practices articles

◆ We acknowledged challenges that exist due to differential access to the internet in many countries. There also was a consensus that a sliding scale for ACOSA dues seems to be in order

◆ Due to time limits (the call lasted almost ninety minutes), our primary focus was on individual membership, but we did touch on the possibilities for group discounts, as well as reciprocal agreements with other international organizations. Lee and Yossi previously had done considerable work thinking through questions about operational and structural models for forming groups, and eventually chapters, in other countries. Their report, which was submitted at the 2007 ACOSA meetings, and published in *The ACOSA Update* in Spring/Summer 2008 (Vol. 21/3), was re-sent to all IIC members after the call.

◆ This conference call was conducted using the technology of SKYPE. Participants were located in Japan, Israel and six different states in the U.S. Technical problems were at a minimum. Seven callers were at their computers (using head phones) and there was ZERO COST for those linkages. Connection costs to one land-line phone were very modest. Up to twenty four participants can engage in the same conference call utilizing SKYPE, and it was duly

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# A Supervisor's First Duty

By Richard Boettcher, PhD

I frequently ask my MSW students in my organizational behavior classes: "What is the highest primary responsibility of a front line supervisor?" I receive a range of plausible responses, such as: Show leadership by helping workers translate agency mission into action. Or, provide tangible and emotional support to supervisees. Or perhaps the supervisor's primary responsibility is to perform an educative function with regard to problem solving methods and techniques as well as community resources essential to productive practice.



## Social Administration

While all of the above have merit as high level supervisory functions, the primary and highest duty of the first level supervisor is to assure and provide for the physical and emotional *safety* of those being supervised. I tell my students that this is the supervisor's primary duty toward supervisees, and that they should incorporate this idea both professionally and personally as a kind of extension of the doctrine of *in loco parentis*. Your supervisees need to be looked after, protected and kept safe.

**"Human service organizations can be dangerous places, especially for unprotected or neophyte social workers."**

While this moral imperative may seem obvious in industrial and commercial settings where there is heavy machinery, moving parts, equipment traffic and heavy lifting, its relevance for the more sedentary and information oriented human service organization requires some elucidation.

Human service organizations can be dangerous places, especially for unprotected or neophyte social workers. I recall one of my former students coming to visit about her new job. When I inquired about the bruise and bite marks she had on her face, hands and arms, she explained she received these marks regularly from the angry, aggressive boys she was "working with" in a treatment center. Another former student, also new to her job and working late, was viciously assaulted in the dimly lighted agency parking lot. She suffered permanent loss of significant brain functions. A former male student was punched in the face when he delivered a piece of news which greatly frustrated his unstable, un-

predictable client. And then there is the case of the local child welfare worker who was shot and killed by the father of the children whom she had removed from the home.

These are, to be sure, rare and perhaps spectacular events, but they do demonstrate the real physical dangers and risks that social workers are exposed to. And each event described above was preventable or avoidable if supervisors and superiors had addressed these risk situations appropriately.

The supervisor of the worker with the bruises and bite marks told her to accept this behavior in order to develop a relationship with the children. I told her and helped her to get a new job at once. The supervisors of the assaulted worker denied any liability for the dimly lighted parking lot and for not arranging for her to be accompanied to her car. The supervisor of the punched-out worker ignored all the signs that the client was dangerous, and she permitted the social worker to break bad news to the client alone and behind a closed door. In the case of the murdered child welfare worker, her supervisor allowed her to make a solo home visit and then she found herself alone with a man who had a record of prior felonies and extensive drug abuse. All of these incidents could have been prevented if supervisors had adopted the rule that "Safety is Job One."

In addition to physical dangers, threats to one's sense of psychological safety are often present in the environments of human service organizations. Some agencies are located in old buildings where asbestos is present, and this is a worrisome and potentially hazardous condition. Some HSO's have inadequate toilet facilities and drinking water. Some agency buildings are chronically dirty and laden with air borne dust that affects respiration. Inadequate, sub-standard physical environments can do undermine the need for a sense of safety, and *safety* is number two in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

In addition to the above undermining conditions, there may be other threats and hazards to the social worker's sense of safety and security. For example, budget reductions, funding losses, non-renewed grants, and agency mergers represent the possibility of job loss or, at least, a redefinition of duties which often results in job overload.

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# ACOSA OFFICER AND BOARD CANDIDATES

## **Vice-Chair \*(Chair-Elect) 2009- 2012**

\* Candidates are running for **both** Vice Chair (2 years) & Chair (3 years). ACOSA Bylaw 5.3 – “A Vice Chairperson will be elected 2 years before the end of the 3 year term of the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson will become the Chairperson after the end of the two-year term.”

**SONDRA J. FOGEL** is an associate professor of social work at the University of South Florida. She held the position of ACOSA Southern Regional Representative. More recently, I have served as Chair of the Awards Committee, followed by membership on the Budget Committee and as a member of the Ad-Hoc By-Laws Committee. I have served on the Board of the *Journal of Community Practice* and remain a reviewer.

**CHRIS VALLEY** is the Vice President for Research and Development at Families First, a multi-service non-profit community family and children’s agency in Atlanta, where he has been for 34 years. An ACOSA member for 10+ years, he was ACOSA Practitioner of the Year in 2005 and has contributed practitioner perspectives and commentary to the *ACOSA Update!* newsletter and the *Journal of Community Practice*.

**Look for Your ACOSA Ballot**

**In the packet with this issue**

**PLEASE**

**Return Ballots by May 30, 2009**

**To the ACOSA Office**

**ACOSA (Election)**

**20560 Bensley Avenue**

**Lynwood, IL 60411**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOTE**

## **Board Members\***

\* Board members will be elected to three (3) year terms - 2009-2012. Board members are elected to represent seven (7) regions. Currently, there are no vacancies for the West and International regions.

### **Northeast**

***Sondra Doe***

***University of Southern Maine***

***Jerry Marx***

***University of New Hampshire***

### **Mid-Atlantic**

***Ellen Darden***

***Concord University***

***Stephen Kauffman***

***Widener University***

### **Midwest**

***DeBrenna L. Agbényiga***

***Michigan State University***

***Michele Kelly***

***University of Illinois at Chicago***

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***Richard Beaulaurier***

***Florida International University***

***Wendy Campbell***

***Winthrop University***

### **Southwest**

***Deborah Adams***

***University of Kansas***

***Dnika Travis***

***University of Texas at Austin***

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX:

by Betsy Benjamin, Gail Golden and Rose Leandre

This article chronicles the evolution of a promising collaboration which may have value for other human service providers. It is an account of how one white, middle class agency (VCS Inc.) has partnered with a grassroots Haitian organization (HACSO) to provide some culturally relevant mental health services. Many of the concepts that informed this project were gained through years of Undoing Racism training offered by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB).\*

The real roots of the partnership began with relationship building. The Clinical Director of VCS and the Executive Director of HACSO had a number of opportunities to work together in community groups. Regular association generated mutual respect and opportunities to learn about the work that each was doing. VCS staff made a commitment to support HACSO, attend its events and fundraising efforts, and offered to serve on the HACSO Board of Directors. The Executive Director of HACSO provided valuable information and insight into the needs and concerns of her community, which enhanced the capacity of VCS counselors. Her agency was also an important referral source when VCS clients required assistance with concrete needs.

HACSO is an agency in Spring Valley NY, home to a large Haitian community. HACSO provides a wide range of concrete services, including assistance with immigration issues, enrollment in Health insurance programs, filling out forms, housing, employment, cancer screenings and much more. HACSO basically functions as a walk-in agency. People come when they have a specific need and are served the same day, whether or not they have an appointment. Clients are accustomed to patiently sitting in the waiting room until it is their turn. HACSO has a very small but devoted staff. No one is turned away and the staff works hard to meet the needs of the community.

VCS is a family service agency with a unique tradition of training lay volunteers from the community to provide skillful counseling for very low fees. VCS has received many awards for its work and has come to be seen as an important part of the service delivery system in Rockland County.

VCS has an office in New City NY, the county seat, but will also meet in village libraries and houses of worship with those clients who lack transportation. Because of our

low fees and willingness to see clients off-site, many grassroots agencies refer to us. Nonetheless, the ED at HACSO felt that there were mental health needs in her community that were not being well addressed. It was her experience that when clients came to her for help with concrete services, they often began to share other personal and family problems with the HACSO staff. Because clients seemed to have a pressing need to talk on a personal level, it took a longer time for staff to make referrals, fill out forms and complete other necessary tasks.

Also, HACSO staff was not trained to deal with serious depression, domestic violence, grief and loss, post traumatic stress and a host of other issues clients presented. The two agencies began a series of conversations about how VCS could be more helpful to HACSO clients. This process was energized by United Way of Rockland County which invited agencies to partner in order to address a series of identified basic needs. More accessible mental health services for uninsured consumers was one such identified need. More bilingual mental health services were also needed. The two agencies were given a grant to address this problem.

We developed a tentative working plan. It began by offering the VCS counselor training to the HACSO staff so that they would be more familiar with our work and thus feel comfortable referring their clients for counseling. HACSO staff would then identify those clients who might benefit from one to one counseling. VCS professional staff would offer intake appointments on site at HACSO. HACSO staff would assist with translation if that was necessary. Once an assessment was made, VCS would provide a volunteer counselor who could meet with the client on a weekly basis, at HACSO if that was most convenient. With the United Way grant, VCS also would increase its effort to recruit more bi-lingual counselor trainees from the Haitian community

The HACSO ED was concerned that pre-scheduled, once-a-week counseling sessions might not prove 'user-friendly' to her consumers. They were accustomed to coming to HACSO when they had a pressing need. They were used to having that need attended to in a

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# A NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

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timely manner, usually on the day they walked in. The idea of having to wait several days for an “intake” or of coming for counseling when there was no crisis was not normative. Nonetheless, we decided to go forward with our pilot project in the spirit of the PISAB which urges us think outside of the box and to take our direction from the community we are trying to serve.

The VCS Assistant Clinical Director assumed responsibility for implementing the project in September 2007. She met regularly with HACSO staff to discuss launching the program and helped develop publicity materials. Her ensuing dialog with the case managers conformed to the ED’s comments about the expectations of HACSO client base.

The Associate Clinical Director had attended the PISAB multiple times. As a result, she was well acquainted with the need for white people to listen to the voices of people of color. In the meetings with HACSO staff and the ED, she elicited crucial information about the needs of HACSO’s clientele. The HACSO staff doubted that the traditional white middle class counseling model would work. But at the time they could not think of a viable alternative. So, while the both partners had questions about the design, they agreed to proceed and try to learn from ensuing experiences and mistakes.

In the next several months, HACSO staff made referrals for intake appointments at the HACSO office. Appointments were not kept. However, there continued to be a steady stream of HACSO clients eagerly discussing person problems while filling out forms or arranging for other services discuss personal problems. The ED and the caseworkers continued meet to dialog with the VCS Associate Clinical Director about how to get these clients to utilize the available service.

The VCS Associate Clinical Director continued to reach out to the community, follow up on referrals and worry about the lack of utilization, especially since she continued to be told by HACSO workers about their clients desperate need for counseling. About 6 months into the initiative, she had an epiphany. The people were coming to HACSO, and pouring out their life concerns and stresses to the case managers. The case managers had already completed the VCS counselor training. Why not create a “paradigm

shift”? Rather than spending a part of their “case work” time listening to the clients’ mental health concerns, then calling VCS with a referral for intake, *the case managers themselves* could counsel the clients who were already in front of them. It made perfect sense. These workers already had formed a helping relationship with the clients and the clients have a trust in the organization. The ground was already fertile for a counseling alliance to grow. The VCS Associate Clinical director could provide ongoing supervision and support for the HACSO workers. This would give them the opportunity to enhance their counseling skills, provide the clients with a much-needed service and deliver what the clients already expected: i.e. when clients appeared at HACSO they would receive help with their problems within a very short period of time.

The VCS Associate Clinical met with the HACSO ED to discuss the idea of “shifting” the mode of service delivery. The caseworkers already were performing many different tasks to help the clients, but whether the ED would be willing to have them counsel as well remained a significant question. The HACSO ED, a very bright, committed, visionary thinker, immediately accepted the idea and was hopeful that we might be on to something. She set up a meeting for the Associate Clinical Director to speak with her two caseworkers about the new plan.

At this meeting, the workers had many questions and concerns. Implementing the plan required a shift in perspective. The workers had been viewing their job of providing concrete services and the job of counseling as two separate functions. They did casework; they referred clients to VCS for counseling. The original idea of the grant was “save the caseworkers time” by having another agency do the counseling. This fits with certain traditional social work concepts about how to deliver services. In retrospect, it now appears to make much more sense to take care of all the clients’ needs together. However there were still challenges to overcome.

The caseworkers and the ACD continued to meet and talk, building relationships. They concretized a plan. One early obstacle was the workers concern about

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# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

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whether they could actually “counsel” their clients. Since the workers had taken the VCS counselor training they were aware of the differences between the role of counselor and the role of caseworker. They worried about their ability to integrate the two roles into a helpful model. A very large component of the VCS Associate Clinical Director’s job is to train and supervise lay people to provide effective counseling. Fear of lack of competence is normative for new counselors and is ameliorated by processing the counselors’ feelings in supervision. As she and the caseworkers met in supervision over time, the workers began to develop better counseling skills, experience some mastery and competence in their new role and, as a result, became more comfortable “wearing the counselor hat”. After awhile, the caseworkers and the HACSO ED began to notice that certain clients were beginning to return to the agency when they had no concrete needs but just wanted to process something with their caseworker.

Besides working through the caseworkers normative “beginner’s anxiety” another challenge was that this new way of working would omit the professional assessment part of the VCS model. (All VCS clients have an intake with a professional social worker to determine whether or not they are appropriate for work with a trained lay person. If they need a higher level of care, they are referred to the Rockland County Mental Health Clinic.). The workers and the ACD developed a map for implementing this idea in a safe way. The caseworkers and the ED were already referring clients whom they thought were in need of professional care to the County Clinic. In essence, they were already doing an essential component of the traditional VCS intake process by making these referrals. But, what happens when someone comes to intake, seems appropriate for lay counseling, and later in the process appears to need a higher level of care? This is often manifested by the caseworkers’ feelings of being overwhelmed. The solution resides in ongoing

Rose Leandre, Executive Director of HACSO shares a number of very helpful observations about this project.

◆ Rose says that in her community people only tend to seek help when they feel like they are in a crisis, or in her words “feel frantic.” This program has been effective, in her view, because it works with this concept. People can drop in and talk when they need to

◆ Rose observes that many of her clients have prob-

lems with self esteem and relationships. She says that without people to talk to, many of her clients tend to become very agitated and very loud. They have trouble getting their thoughts straight and can present in a manner that could seem bizarre to professionals unfamiliar with the language and culture.

◆ “Band-Aid” counseling can eventually morph into something that looks like more traditional counseling by appointment. However, without the first level of Band-Aid work, people do not have the chance to experience the ways in which talking can help.

Based on our experiences so far, we think that this model of service may have promise for other community based organizations which are not mental health clinics per se but see many clients with a variety of issues, including personal and emotional needs. This model would need to be adapted to the specific needs of different communities and different kinds of agencies. The success to date with HACSO suggests that it is worth the effort to stretch our thinking about how to deliver mental health support to various communities and to continue to explore non-traditional ways to support people with ‘social crises’.

\* The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB), is a national and international collective of anti-racist, multicultural community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social transformation. The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, affectionately known in the community as The People’s Institute, considers racism the primary barrier preventing communities from building effective coalitions and overcoming institutionalized oppression and inequities. Through Undoing Racism™/Community Organizing Workshops, technical assistance and consultations, PISAB helps individuals, communities, organizations and institutions move beyond addressing the symptoms of racism to undoing the causes of racism so as to create a more just and equitable society.

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## Supervisor's Duty

(Continued from page 4)

Workers can and do respond to these threats by becoming physically ill. They manifest signs of acute anxiety or depression or both, i.e., loss of appetite, insomnia, somatic symptoms and a pervading sense of dread.

As noted earlier, safety -a sense of being safe – is a baseline, fundamental Maslowian need. If people are not safe or do not feel safe, they cannot be open to the higher order needs that must be activated to perform effective social work practice. The supervisor who wants to promote the practice of high quality social work will first assure that her workers are both safe and feel safe, physically and psychologically. As a supervisor, one should look upon this duty as an extension of the doctrine of shared or vicarious liability known as *respondeat superior*, i. e., “let the master answer”(Lynch & Versen, 2003).

### Reference

Lynch, J.G. &Versen, G.R. (2003). Social work supervisor liability: Risk factors and strategies for risk reduction. *Administration in Social Work*, 27(2), 57-72.

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## CONGRATULATION NEW JCP EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

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## ACOSA in Japan

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collaboration between the public sector (the government) and the private sector (such as social service providers and community-based organizations) also needs to be studied. Another suggested that there have been new experiments of community-university collaborations being developed with field practicum where students spend weeks in a community-setting and carry out new projects with local residents, organizations and government. At the end, it was not the differences or similarities that were highlighted at the conference but the international collaboration being developed among participants .

Aside from the conference, delegates of researchers and students from JRACD participated in separate meetings, prior and after the conference, to discuss about the future collaboration between ACOSA and JRACD. Fifteen people represented 7 universities sat down with Dr. Mizrahi and Dr. Korazim to talk about their interests in being involved in ACOSA, both getting something out of ACOSA and contributing something to ACOSA. A few items from the discussion are as follows.

- To provide a peer-to-peer assistance when Japanese researchers want to publish an article in Journal of Community Practice or other related journals in English.
- To develop an exchange program between practitioners, researchers and students from Japan and the U.S., or any other countries.
- To exchange teaching/training materials such as syllabus and curricula.
- To establish a better communication and sharing information such as submitting articles to each other's newsletters, holding teleconferences with translation, and the translation of materials from a Japanese journal to JCP and vice versa.

People appreciated Dr. Mizrahi and Dr. Korazim for taking such a long flight to attend the conference. They stayed in Japan for a week, which was probably not long enough to fully understand the complexity of community development in Japan. However, it was certainly long enough for them to influence the people, fields and research of community development in Japan. They left the country a seed planted for future collaborations.

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# From a National Day of Service to the Promise of Citizen Power

*By Francis Moore Lappe*

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It was a Martin Luther King Day like none other! Via videos, both Barack and Michelle Obama movingly called us to get out and make it a National Day of Service. I was thrilled, hearing of millions of Americans connecting in common purpose -- many, for the first time. But I sense a surprising misfit between this call for "service" and the Obama's' own work empowering communities, as well as what our hurting nation most needs. Might this be the perfect moment to reflect on "service"?

My own hesitation about the service frame is simple: If I serve, someone else is being served. If I serve, I act, but the other -- the beneficiary -- does not. Making ourselves servants, we might also ignore our own legitimate needs as well as be tempted to imagine we already know what others' needs are. In any case "service" seems to create two classes: the givers and the receivers.

And that's a big problem. Doesn't this dichotomy help blind us to the reality of the human condition that Martin Luther King, Jr. called us to see? In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," he wrote, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

The strong communities we need in order to rebuild our nation, and our own lives, arise, I believe, only as we focus on Dr. King's "network of mutuality." Through this lens, we realize that in serving others we serve ourselves. And that's good: all self-interest is relational. A study of over three thousand people found a "helpers' high," with fully 95 percent of volunteers reporting they feel better emotionally and physically -- with more energy and serenity -- after helping others.

But these rewards may be the thinnest layer of our "receiving." For through the lens of "networks of mutuality," we realize that the quality of our lives depends on the liberation of talents\* of all other members of our communities. Just think for a moment of the doctors, teachers, and scientists lost to America today because almost a fifth of our children are growing in life-stunting poverty. A recent study found that childhood poverty costs our country yearly



about \$500 billion; and dollars capture but a fraction of the real value of which we're robbing ourselves.

The service frame also fails to capture the deeper, almost universal human need for efficacy, for power. In the service mode it's easy to forget that the recipients of our acts have just as great a need for efficacy --including the need to give -- as we do. But if we shift the frame to one of co-creating power -- problem-solving power -- much changes. Most important, we perceive those we want to "help" as key to the solution.

Both Michelle and Barack were part of community organizing networks grounded in these truths. In the 1980s Barack led one of the (now) forty-five affiliate groups of the Chicago-based Gamaliel Foundation network. Gamaliel defines its philosophy of "civic participation" as enabling all to "participate in shaping the community in which they live." The Gamaliel network operates in seventeen states and in three provinces of South Africa -- all supporting grassroots leaders in low-income communities. They do not commonly use the term "service."

This ecumenical congregation-based network is just one of a half dozen nationally that involve roughly three million Americans, all working on foundational questions of democracy -- from school reform to health care to immigration policy. One, for example, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, comprising sixty-five congregations and other organization affiliates -- and linked with the national Industrial Areas Foundation network -- is widely credited as among the most powerful forces moving Massachusetts closer than just about any other state to universal health coverage.

Gamaliel calls its approach a "practice of hope," and speaks of "organizing hope" as its goal. I love that. But the practice of hope you can't plug into through one or even several days of service. It rests on relationships of trust and skill built over time -- relationships of "mutuality."

Unfortunately, focusing just on calls for service can

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## From National Service to Citizen Power

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help to keep these and similar citizen empowerment networks invisible to most Americans. Because they are not widely known and appreciated as examples of "living democracy," it's possible for fear-driven misrepresentations easily to spread. Just Google "Gamaliel," and you'll see what I mean.

The Obamas have lived and taught the truth to which Dr. King's words call us. So let us hold them and ourselves to what they and we know -- that our real task is engagement in building strong communities because we do indeed live within "a single garment of destiny." This is the work of hope.

Frances Moore Lappe, of the Cambridge-based Small Planet Institute, is the author or co-author of sixteen books, including *Getting a Grip: Clarity, Creativity, and Courage in a World Gone Mad*.

Thanks to *The Huffington Post - The Internet Newspaper: News Blogs Video Community*.

For more information on the **Gamaliel Foundation**, which promotes faith and democracy, please visit their website at: [www.gamaliel.org](http://www.gamaliel.org)

**Editors Note:** This theme of citizen empowerment, of seeing those we work with as citizens, not consumers or clients, is emerging as an important national focus. This reprinted article is presented as an outstanding commentary on this growing theme. If you are working on a citizen empowerment effort, share your work with ACOSA.

## An Invitation to Join...ACOSA

If you teach, practice, conduct policy/advocacy or research with community as a context, then ACOSA is your premiere organization for networking, keeping current within your interest area, sharing ideas and mutual learning. Founded by social work macro practice educators almost three decades ago, we are a growing trans-disciplinary and international membership organization committed to advancing the fields of community organization and community building, policy and advocacy, nonprofit administration and community-based research.

**Students, Scholars, Practitioners and Advocates with a focus on community and macro practice:**

Membership is just a click away!

[www.ACOSA.org](http://www.ACOSA.org)

## International Report

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noted that this technology has great utility for increasing international communication and collaboration.

As a next step, the IIC asks that ACOSA members submit a short 100 word bio that indicates:

- international work that they have done or currently are doing
- areas of interest and expertise
- If they are open to explore joining an online interest group
- if they would be willing to provide some pre-submission technical editing assistance for international colleagues who wish to publish best practices articles through ACOSA
- if they are willing to serve as a mentor for an international colleague

Information will be posted on the ACOSA website.

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### Are You...

- ◆ **Planning a regional ACOSA Meeting?**
- ◆ **Working with Community Practitioners Groups or Community-based Initiatives?**
- ◆ **Engaged in Interesting Community Initiatives?**

**Please Share Your Community Practice Work and Ideas with ACOSA**

**We would like to regularly feature your reports from regional community efforts  
Send to ACOSA Update: [tsssw@pitt.edu](mailto:tsssw@pitt.edu)**



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more exciting reading**

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## The Association for Community Organization and Social Administration

ACOSA is a registered 501c3 membership organization for community organizers, planners, activists, administrators, policy practitioners, students, and professors. ACOSA members represent a variety of disciplines and professional fields which strive to strengthen community organization and social administration in practice and education. *ACOSA Update!* is published quarterly by the Association for Community Organization & Social Administration (ACOSA).

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